YES SIR, SHE TOOK THE KID INSIDE THE SCHOOL. WE NEED TO SURROUND THIS PLACE FAST!

MEGAN FAIRCHILD! LET THE GIRL GO AND GIVE YOURSELF UP!

MEGAN! BEHIND US!

BLAM

BLAM

D-DID YOU... KILL HIM?

I DON'T KNOW, SUSAN

I HOPE SO... I HOPE HE'S DEAD!


BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
YOU SCARY OLD MONSTER!
JUST LEAVE US ALONE!
THERE ARE NOT YET ENOUGH
POLICE TO COVER THIS BUILDING.
IF YOU EXIT THROUGH THE BACK,
I'LL DISTRACT THEM.

WHY WOULD YOU HELP US?

DO YOU KNOW SYLVIA TRENCH?

THE OLD WIDOW? I THINK SHE STILL LIVES AROUND HERE.

MEET ME IN HER LIVING ROOM IN ONE HOUR.

YOU WANT ME TO BREAK INTO AN OLD LADY'S HOUSE?

SHE WON'T MIND...

MEGAN, LET'S GO!

HE WASN'T CHASING US, HE WAS TRYING TO TELL US SOMETHING.

WHAT?

I DON'T KNOW YET

CRACK!!!

WHAT WAS THAT?!

KNOCK KNOCK

KNOCK

MS. TRENCH?

NO ANSWER. DOOR'S UNLOCKED, THOUGH...

WHY HELLO, MEGAN. ITS BEEN A LONG TIME.

AND SO GROWN UP NOW. I WAS JUST TALKING TO YOUR FRIEND HERE. I KNEW THOSE THINGS THEY SAID IN THE PAPER ABOUT YOU WEREN'T TRUE

IS THIS SUSAN? HELLO. MY NAME IS SYLVIA.

HELLO...

MY, AREN'T YOU CUTE?

LIKE A BUTTON?

EXACTLY!

MY GOODNESS! SUCH ESTEEMED COMPANY AND ALL IN ONE NIGHT!

IF I HAD KNOWN THAT ALL I HAD TO DO TO GET SOME VISITORS WAS TO PASS ON...

I WOULD HAVE KEELED OVER A LONG TIME AGO.

HUH?

ARE YOU A GHOST?

OH HEAVENS NO! YOUR FRIEND TELLS ME THOSE ARE "RUNNERS" OR SOME SUCH THING. I WASN'T LISTENING THAT WELL, I'M AFRAID.

MS. TRENCH, I NEED TO TALK TO MEGAN ALONE. WOULD YOU MIND TAKING SUSAN INTO THE OTHER ROOM?

OF COURSE.

OH, NOT AT ALL. AND THEN WE'LL BE GOING?

WONDERFUL! I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE MY SEAN AGAIN.

SEAN WAS MY HUSBAND, SUSAN. WE USED TO GO BOATING AND HAVE PICNICS.

MR. JACK? IS THERE A RIVER IN HEAVEN SO THAT WE CAN DO THAT AGAIN?

IF YOU LIKE.

SUSAN? WOULD YOU CARE TO SEE A PICTURE OF HIM?

YES, MISS.

I REMEMBER YOU NOW, MEGAN FAIRCHILD.

THREE YEARS AGO, WASN'T IT?

...A DRUNK DRIVER CRASHED INTO A GAS STATION.

THE EXPLOSION SENT SHRAPNEL EVERYWHERE. YOUR TIME WAS UP!

WHAT HAPPENED?

I BUMPED INTO SOMEONE...

THE SHRAPNEL BARELY MISSED MY HEAD.

JUSTI WAS HER NAME. WE BOTH THOUGHT I HAD A NEAR MISS. IT WAS A MONTH LATER WHEN I NOTICED I DIDN'T NEED TO SLEEP ANYMORE THAT I STARTED TO THINK I WAS SUPPOSED TO DIE...

JUSTI. I KNOW HER. SHE CAN SEE ME TOO. SHE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN THERE TO "SAVE" YOU IF SOMEONE HADN'T SAVED HER EARLIER.

SO WE WERE SUPPOSED TO DIE? YOU'RE SAYING THERE'S A PREARRANGED DESTINY FOR US AND I SHOULD FEEL BAD BECAUSE WHEN I SAW YOU LOOMING OVER SUSAN'S HOSPITAL BED I DECIDED TO SAVE HER?

DESTINY IS A FORM OF PUNISHMENT WHERE I COME FROM. IF IT EXISTED, YOU AND SUSAN WOULD BE DEAD.

THE SIMPLEST WAY TO EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU IS THAT YOUR CLOCK HAS STOPPED. YOU MISSED YOUR CHANCE TO DIE.

IN THE LAST THREE YEARS YOU'VE SLEPT, BUT NEVER BEEN TIRED, EATEN BUT NEVER BEEN HUNGRY, YOUR HAIR HAS NOT GROWN. IF YOU BROKE A LEG, IT WOULD MEND IMMEDIATELY. IF YOU HELD YOUR BREATH, YOU WOULD HAVE NO NEED FOR AIR.

YOU EXIST IN A PERPETUAL STATE, MEGAN. JUST AS YOU WERE AT THE MOMENT YOU SHOULD HAVE DIED. IF THAT IS LIFE, YOU WILL LIVE FOREVER.

W-WELL WHAT ABOUT—

YOUR BIOLOGY DOESN'T WORK ANYMORE.

YOU CAN NEVER HAVE CHILDREN.

I-I-I ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A-- A-

YOU DON'T HAVE THIS TALK WITH EVERYONE LIKE ME, DO YOU?

No.

I CAN TELL. SO WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME?

I'M TELLING YOU THIS SO THAT YOU KNOW HOW YOU HURT THAT LITTLE GIRL.

I HURT HER?! YOU WERE GOING TO KILL SUSAN! I SAVED HER!!

WHAT'S SAVING HER THIS WAY WORTH? WHY SAVE HER AT ALL...?

WHY? WHY?! YOU HEARTLESS BASTARD!

TO GIVE HER A CHANCE! TO LET HER SMILE!

TO LAUGH AND PLAY LIKE THE OTHER KIDS! TO GROW UP AND FALL IN LOVE...

....AND HAVE CHILDREN OF HER OWN... A-AND GROW OLD...

AND... AND...

OH GOD. OH MY GOD!

SHE CAN'T!!

NO. SHE CAN'T...

SHE WILL ALWAYS BE AS SHE IS NOW, MEGAN.

IN MIND AND BODY BOTH. THERE WILL BE NO GROWING UP.

IN SOME WAYS, ITS A BLESSING, RIGHT...?

AT LEAST SHE'LL NEVER KNOW WHAT SHE MISSED.

I WANTED TO TELL YOU BECAUSE OTHERWISE IT WOULD HAVE TAKEN YOU YEARS TO SEE IT.

IF YOU WANT TO BLAME SOMEONE, BLAME GOD, FOR ALL THE GOOD IT WOULD DO YOU. HE MADE THE WORLD WORK LIKE THIS.

WHAT HAVE I DONE...?

I KNEW A BOY LIKE SUSAN IS NOW...

INNOCENT, FLAWLESS, A PERFECT CHILD UNTIL I—

...UNTIL I FAILED HIM.

YOU HAVE TO PROTECT HER FROM THOSE WHO WON'T UNDERSTAND HER.

PLEASE, TELL ME HOW TO FIX THIS!

THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO.

NO! I WON'T BELIEVE THAT!

YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS A LONG SHOT. THEY LIKELY WON'T REMEMBER. I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE EXACTLY TO FIND THEM. ALL I CAN TELL YOU IS TO HEAD EAST.

THERE MIGHT BE...

WHAT? TELL ME!

WHATEVER IT IS, I'LL DO IT!

I DON'T CARE IF IT'S A LONG SHOT! IT'S BETTER THAN NOTHING AND I'LL FIND THEM! NOW, WHO AM I LOOKING FOR?

WITH THAT SQUARED AWAY, I THINK I'VE KEPT THIS WOMAN FROM HER HUSBAND LONG ENOUGH.

GOOD LUCK, GIRLS! COME VISIT ME AGAIN... BUT NOT TOO SOON!

THANK YOU FOR LETTING US BORROW YOUR CAR, MS. TRENCH.

NONSENSE, MEGAN! JUST BRING IT BACK WHEN-

OH! THAT'S RIGHT! ON SECOND THOUGHT, JUST FIND IT A HOME ON A ROADSIDE SOMEWHERE.

MEGAN? HOW FAR AWAY WE GOING?

I'M NOT SURE. THE REAPER JUST SAID TO GO EAST.

HOPE THEY KNOW WE'RE COMING...

ME TOO.

IF YOU'RE TIRED, GO AHEAD AND NAP, HONEY.

I'M NOT TIRED.

WELL, WHY DON'T YOU GET OUT YOUR COLORS SO YOU CAN DRAW PICTURES FOR YOUR MAMA?

NO. THEY'LL JUST CALL YOU NAMES AGAIN.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

A NEWSPAPER AT THE OLD LADY'S HOUSE HAS YOUR PICTURE ON IT

OH?

IT SAID YOU WERE TORCHURING MUM WITH LETTERS AND PICTURES FROM HER "DEAD" BABY. IT SAID YOU FAKED THEM

OH...

MEGAN? ARE WE REALLY DEAD?

NO! ABSOLUTELY NOT!

BUT THE NEWSPAPER SAID I WAS DEAD!

YOU KNOW WHAT WE'LL DO? WE'LL GET ONE OF THOSE NEWSPAPERS AND TAKE YOUR PICTURE WITH IT. THAT WILL PROVE TO EVERYONE THAT YOU ARE NOT DEAD

THEY'LL JUST SAY YOU "FOTO-CHOPPED" IT OR SOMETHING.

FOTO-CHOP?

YEAH! LIKE WHEN YOU PUT A PICTURE ON A COMPUTER AND CHANGE IT ALL AROUND!

YOU MEAN PHOTOSHOP! THAT'S PRETTY SHARP FOR A KID, SUSAN.

NUH-UH

IT IS! YOU'RE A SMART G-

NOT SMART! I'M A GENIUS!

HA! WELL IF THAT'S SO, THEN I'M AN ALGEBRATARIAN

NUH-UH! THEN I'M A BE'NECK ULAVARIS!

CATALAGRAPHER

DAMECUVARIAN!

ELUQUISITORWITH CHERRIES ON TOP

WAS THAT "E"?

YES.

FAMELOPUTLRA GRESNATOR PLUS IMFIMITY!

YOU GOT ME. I CAN'T THINK OF A GOOD "G" WORD.

I WIN!

THAT ONE?

THERE'S NO WIND SO NOBODY'S FLAGS LOOK RIGHT UNLESS THEY RUN AROUND IN CIRCLES

HEE! WHAT ABOUT THAT ONE?

ON THAT PLANET, EVERY-BODY BURPS AT THE SAME TIME AND IT KNOCKS EVERYTHING DOWN... SO THEY HAVE TO BUILD IT ALL OVER AGAIN.

HAHAHA!

SUSAN, SHH. WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE HIDING, REMEMBER?

SORRY, MEGAN. OOH, WHAT ABOUT THAT ONE?

EVERYTHING THERE IS EXACTLY THE SAME AS HERE. SO MUCH SO THAT UP THERE, A LITTLE GIRL IS POINTING AT THIS SPOT AND ASKING WHAT GOES ON HERE.

IS THERE A PARTICULAR ONE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR?

WHICH ONE IS HEAVEN?

YOU SEE THAT ONE?

WHICH ONE?

THE BRIGHT ONE AT THE END OF THE DIPPER

OH!

IT LOOKS NICE...

YEAH. IT DOES....

YA KNOW WHAT I JUST FIGURED OUT? IF HEAVEN'S UP THERE AND WE'RE STILL DOWN HERE THEN WE CAN'T BE DEAD!

YOU, YOUNG LADY, ARE A GENIUS.

THAT SCARY MAN WASN'T SO BAD, WAS HE?

NO. IT WAS KIND OF SILLY RUNNING FROM HIM AS LONG AS WE DID.

DO YOU THINK HE WENT TO HEAVEN WITH THE OLD LADY?

OH HE'S NOT ON ANY OF THESE STARS. HE'S ON ONE ABOVE BEIJING

BAY-SHING?

YEAH AND THEY'RE NOT TOO HAPPY ABOUT IT.

HEE! I LOVE YOU, MEGAN.

I LOVE YOU TOO, SUSAN.

MEGAN? CAN I GO TO SLEEP FOR AWHILE?

ARE YOU GETTING TIRED?

NO. JUS' WANT TO.

YOU GO RIGHT AHEAD.

IS IT GOING TO BE MUCH LONGER?

I'M JUST NOT SURE, SUSAN. I KIND OF WISH I KNEW...

I MISS MUMMA.

I KNOW YOU DO, HONEY. I WANT TO TAKE YOU BACK TO HER AS SOON AS I CAN.

BUT I HAVE TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT FIRST.

I KNOW.

CAN I TURN ON THE RADIO?

SURE YOU CAN. LET'S SEE WHAT'S ON.

JUST NOT THE NEWS...

SSK-K-K- ADIES AND GENTLEMEN I KNOW WE DON'T USUALLY TAKE DEDICATIONS THIS EARLY IN THE MORNING...

BUT I JUST GOT OFF THE PHONE WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS CHANGED MY LIFE...

SO WHILE I CALL MY KID, PLEASE ENJOY...

KANSAS FOR MEGAN AND SUSAN FROM PEG SAYING "YOU'RE ON THE RIGHT ROAD. JUST KEEP ON GOING."

♪ CARRY ON MY WAYWARD SON ♫

DON'T CHANGE THIS CHANNEL

YOU WON'T HEAR ME ARGUE, KIDDO.

LAY YOUR WEARY HEAD TO REST ♫

DO YOU THINK THEY KNOW WE'RE COMING?

DON'T YOU CRY ♩ NO MORE ♫

THERE'LL BE PEACE WHEN YOU ARE ♫ DONE ♪

YEAH... AND IT KINDA SCARES ME.

SUSAN? KEEP OUT OF THE ROAD.

60

NOT THAT IT MATTERS, I GUESS...

STILL, ITS NOT SOMETHING I WANT TO TEST.

M'SORRY MEGAN

BUT THIS IS SO COOL! PEG KNOWS WE'RE COMING!

IT WAS A FLUKE. PEG ISN'T THE NAME THE REAPER GAVE ME.

WE SHOULD GET GOING.

DEAR HEART, WE'RE RUNNING THIS CLUNKER INTO THE GROUND AS IT IS.

IF THE RADIATOR QUITS ON US, WE'RE WALKING.

YOU LADIES NEED HELP?

WE'RE GOOD

WE'RE FINE, BUT THANKS.

I BETCHA PEG IS NICE AND REAL PRETTY

IT WAS JUST A FLUKE, SUSAN.

I'M TELLING YOU, KIDDO, PEG ISN'T THE NAME THE REAPER GAVE ME.

I KNOW THAT! BUT PEG WANTS TO HELP

HEY, MILF!

WANT ME TO GIVE YA A RIDE TO SOCCER PRACTICE?

I ALREADY HAVE A TOW COMING.

SO SCREW OFF.

MEGAN? WHAT'S A MILF?

SOMETHING YOU WILL ALWAYS BE TOO YOUNG TO WORRY ABOUT. NO MATTER WHAT.

BESIDES, WHAT IF THIS PEG IS PART OF THE OPPOSITION? DID YOU THINK OF THAT?

WHAT'S AN OPPOSITION?

HEY, ARE YOU TWO—

WE HAVE A TOW COMING, BUT THANK YOU!

ARE YOU SUSAN AND MEGAN?

I'M GENE. THIS IS MY WIFE, CW.

PEG SENT US.

HRMM... THAT CAR DOESN'T LOOK LIKE IT HAS MANY YEARS LEFT.

BUT ITS GOT A BITCH'N RADIO!

SUSAN! LANGUAGE.

HERE. WHEN PEG CALLED, SHE SAID TO GIVE YOU THIS. WE'VE BEEN HOLDING IT FOR MONTHS.

ITS ADDRESSED TO BRISK...

THAT'S YOU!

THAT'S ME IN HIGH SCHOOL.

WE'D OFFER YOU A LIFT, BUT PEG SAYS YOU TWO ARE GOING THE OTHER WAY.

WHO IS PEG?

NO IDEA. WE'VE NEVER MET HER

BUT WHEN YOU SEE HER, TELL HER WE SAID THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING

WE SURE WILL!

WHAT'S INSIDE?

A CARD WITH AN ADDRESS WRITTEN ON IT... JESUS! NEW YORK?!

IS THAT A LONG WAY?

ITS ABOUT TWO OR THREE DAYS AWAY.

YEESH...

HMM... A RADIATOR CAP AND A LETTER...

DEAR BRISK, THE RADIATOR CAP IN THE CAR YOU'RE DRIVING IS FROM A DIFFERENT MODEL AND THAT'S WHY YOU KEEP LOSING WATER AND OVERHEATING. THIS CAP SHOULD FIT BETTER.

THE NEXT PART OF YOUR JOURNEY WILL BE TERRIBLY HARD, MEGAN. YOU MUST MEMORIZE THE ADDRESS ON THE CARD BECAUSE IT IS NOT GOING TO SURVIVE THE NEXT HARSHNESS...

STAY STRONG. I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU NEED TO FIND ME, BUT I DO KNOW THAT, GOD WILLING, IT MUST HAPPEN.

MEGAN, READ THIS NEXT PART TO YOURSELF ONLY.

MEGAN?

YOU WILL RUN INTO SUSAN'S PARENTS SOON

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

IF YOU LOVE SUSAN AND YOU BELIEVE IN THEIR LOVE FOR HER...

MEGAN?

YOU'LL BREAK THEIR HEARTS.

NO... I CAN'T.

ITS NOTHING YOU NEED TO WORRY ABOUT, SUSAN.

OKAY...

AFTERWARD YOU WILL BE IN GREAT PAIN BUT YOU MUST NEVER LEAVE SUSAN ALONE WITH THE MAN UNDER THE BRIDGE.

YOU CAN READ ALOUD AGAIN. SUSAN IS GETTING ANTSY.

A WEEK!

SEE YOU IN A WEEK. SIGNED PEG.

P.S. - AS HARD AS IT IS TO THINK ABOUT, JUST REMEMBER—

'MEMBER WHAT?

—REMEMBER YOU'RE ALREADY DEAD...

WE ARE NOT DEAD, SUSAN.

BUT PEG SAID—

I DON'T CARE! PEG IS NOT GOD.

LOOK, IF YOU'RE NOT IN HEAVEN, WE CAN'T BE DEAD, RIGHT?

I GUESS SO...

SO SAY IT WITH ME

WE ARE NOT DEAD!

YEAH! WE'RE NOT DEAD!

WOOP WOOP

UH OH!

PULL THE VEHICLE TO THE SIDE OF THE ROAD!

WE'RE DEAD...

ACT SICK, SUSAN. MAYBE WE CAN FAKE IT.

HEYA, FOOLS!

THE COMIC, YOU WILL NOTE, IS DOWN. IT WILL REMAIN SO THROUGH JUNE.

WHY? WELL! THE ARTIST IS BITCHING ABOUT DEPRESSION AND STRESS AND FEELING LIKE HE'S DONE NOTHING WITH HIS LIFE.

HE'S JUST BEING A PUSSY.

HE'LL BE BACK. HE ALWAYS COMES BACK.

SO! WHILE HE PLAYS CATCH-UP AND STALKS HIS INNER CHILD, WE'RE ALL SHIT OUTTA LUCK!

FRIEND TO THE COMIC, KANNAKIN, IS WORKING ON SOMETHING...

A LINK SHOULD BE DOWN THERE EVENTUALLY.

UNTIL JULY, DARLINGS.

... GUESS ITS TIME TO BREAK OUT THE ZIGZAG REAL DOLL, HMM?

STEP OUT OF THE CAR SLOWLY! HANDS IN THE AIR!

WE'RE NOT GOING TO FAKE IT, MEGAN...

I KNOW. JUST STAY LOW AND KEEP QUIET.

OFFICER, I—

HANDS ON THE ROOF OF THE CAR. RIGHT NOW.

SUSAN, LISTEN VERY CAREFULLY...

DON'T EVEN TRY TO TALK YOUR WAY OUT OF THIS. I RAN THE PLATES, THIS IS A STOLEN VEHICLE

ITS NOT STOLEN!

DON'T MAKE THIS ANY-

WAIT A MINUTE...

YOU KILLED THAT LITTLE GIRL!

VROOM

CRASH!

ENF!!

SORRY!

GOOD JOB, SUSAN!

SCOOT DOWN, SWEETIE. I'LL TAKE OVER NOW.

I AIN'T DEAD, POOPFACE!!

OH NO!

YAK-YAK-YAK-YAK

WHAS WRONG?

THE CAR IS SHAKING PRETTY BAD. THE CRASH MUST HAVE KNOCKED SOMETHING LOOSE...

IF WE DON'T STOP NOW, WE MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO LATER. SORRY, SUSAN.

KERCHUMPF

WAIT FOR ME TO HELP YOU OUT, NOW

MEGAN! I SEE POLICE LIGHTS!

I KNOW. THEY'RE ALREADY SETTING UP ROAD BLOCKS BEHIND US TOO

WHERE ARE WE GONNA GO?

I HAVE AN IDEA. GET UP ON MY BACK

JUST HOLD ON TIGHT, SUSAN

DON'T LET GO NO MATTER WHAT

I WON'T!

DON'T YOU LET GO!

O-OKAY, HONEY...

WE'RE AT THE TOP. RIDE'S OVER.

SO... WHAT DO WE DO NOW, MEGAN?

I'M NOT TOO SURE, KIDDO

DOES THIS MEAN WE WON'T GET TO SEE PEG?

LOOKS THAT WAY...

GO AWAY!

JESUS, SUSAN!

ALL OF YOU JUST GO AWAY!

ARE YOU TRYING TO GIVE ME A HEART ATTACK?!

PLEASE, SUSAN, JUST TRY TO CALM DOWN...

THEY'RE STUPID! THEY ALL ARE! THEY DON'T KNOW ANYTHING!

GO AWAY YOU MUFFER SUCKERS!

SUSAN!! IF YOUR MOTHER HEARD YOU TALK LIKE THAT, WHAT WOULD SHE THINK?!

IT DOESN'T MATTER! WE'LL NEVER SEE PEG AN' THE SCARY MAN'LL YELL AT YOU AGAIN AN- AN-

SUSAN, HUSH NOW. NO ONE SAID WE WOULDN'T SEE PEG.

YUH HUH WE WON'T SEE PEG. THIS WHOLE TRIP WAS STUPID.

WAIT A MINUTE. EVEN IF WE STOPPED RIGHT NOW, WHICH WE WON'T, THIS TRIP WAS NOT STUPID.

BECAUSE I LEARNED HOW MUCH I REALLY LOVE YOU, SUSAN.

YOU KNEW THAT ALREADY.

I DIDN'T KNOW HOW MUCH THOUGH. I LOVE YOU LIKE A MOTHER LOVES HER OWN CHILD.

REALLY?

LIKE YOU WERE MY OWN LITTLE BABY.

YOU LEARN ANYTHING ELSE?

WELL...

I LEARNED THAT I CAN'T BE THE CATCHER IN THE RYE...

WHAT'S CATCHER IN THE EYE?

HE'S A YOUNG ADULT, LIKE ME, WHO KEEPS LITTLE GIRLS, LIKE YOU, FROM GROWING UP.

HE SOUNDS LIKE A JERK!

WELL, YOU THINK SO NOW BUT YOU MAY NOT ONCE YOU GET—

...ONCE YOU GET OLDER.

BEING A KID STINKS! JOEY TODRELLIE USED TO PULL MY HAIR AT SCHOOL AND ONLY GROWN UPS GET TO STAY UP LATE!

YES BUT WHEN YOU'RE ALL GROWN UP, STAYING UP LATE USUALLY MEANS SOMEONE CALLED IN SICK.

AFTER A FOURTEEN-HOUR SHIFT A LITTLE HAIR TUG DOESN'T SEEM SO BAD.

HUH?

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, SUSAN.

HOW'RE WE GOING TO GET OUT OF HERE?

I'M STILL WORKING ON IT, KIDDO. I PROMISE

M-MEGAN? ARE YOU UP THERE?

DADDY!

ITS DADDY! I SEE MOMMY TOO! AND BRAD!

HEY BRAD! BETCHA WISH YOU COULD BE UP THIS HIGH, YOU WUSSY!

IS THAT--SUSAN! SUSAN, YOU'RE ALIVE!

I AIN'T DEAD, DADDY!

TELL THESE STUPID HEADS TO GO AWAY!

I DON'T THINK THEY CAN HEAR YOU FROM UP HERE...

SUSAN!! OH, THANK GOD! SUSAN!

MOMMY! HI MOMMY!

I LOVE YOU, MOMMY!

MEGAN?

JUS' A SECOND, MOMMA SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH BRISK!

SUSAN! SUSAN!!

MEGAN, WHAT'S WRONG? DON'T YOU WANNA SAY HI TO MOMMY?

I CAN'T DO THIS...

MEGAN, NO ONE BLAMES YOU FOR ANYTHING.

DON'T CRY, MEGAN... WHAT'S THE MATTER?

I CAN'T DO THIS.

MEGAN? WE DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING, WE JUST WANT TO HELP SUSAN.

I JUST CAN'T. I CAN'T...

IS IT THAT SNITCHER IN THE RYES AGAIN?

DO YOU KNOW WHY WE'RE TAKING THIS TRIP, SUSAN?

YEAH! TO SEE PEG!

THE POLICE ARE COMING UP NOW. THEY AREN'T ARMED, THEY'RE JUST GOING TO HELP YOU AND SUSAN DOWN. THAT'S ALL.

DO YOU KNOW WHY WE'RE GOING TO SEE PEG?

NO...

WE WERE ALL STRESSED DURING THAT TIME. I THINK ALL OF US WANTED TO DO WHAT YOU DID AT SOME POINT, MEGAN...

DO YOU KNOW WHAT I WANTED TO BE WHEN I GREW UP, SUSAN?

WHAT?

WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE, I SAW A SHOW ON TV AND IN IT, A FIREMAN SAVED A LITTLE GIRL FROM A BURNING BUILDING. I DECIDED I WANTED TO BE A FIREMAN SO I COULD SAVE LITTLE GIRLS TOO.

LITTLE GIRLS LIKE ME?

EXACTLY LIKE YOU.

WHEN I GOT THE CHANCE TO LIVE MY DREAM, I THINK I BLEW IT.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

I WANNA BE JUST LIKE YOU, BRISK!

SUSAN... I'M AFRAID IF WE DON'T SEE PEG...

YOU WILL NEVER GROW UP.

N-NEVER?

NEVER...

BUT MOMMY AND DADDY WILL—

NO...THEY WON'T, SUSAN.

ITS TOO MUCH. ITS TOO UNBELIEVABLE. I KNOW YOUR MOM AND DAD, REMEMBER? THEY LOVE YOU SO MUCH THAT AS SOON AS YOU START TALKING ABOUT THE SCARY MAN OR THEY NOTICE YOU AREN'T GROWING OR SLEEPING, THEY'LL WORRY.

THEY'LL TAKE YOU TO A DOCTOR BECAUSE THEY'LL WANT YOU TO GET BETTER. THE DOCTOR WILL SEE SOMETHING IS WRONG AND YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO GO HOME AGAIN

I WISH WE COULD TELL THEM. I LOVE YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER. THEY TOOK ME IN AND MADE ME PART OF YOUR FAMILY. I'D NEVER HURT THEM FOR ANYTHING.

...NOT FOR ANYTHING EXCEPT YOU.

GO AWAY!

I SAID GO AWAY!

OKAY, MA'AM, EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE FINE. LET GO OF THE LITTLE GIRL.

MEGAN? THEY ONLY WANT TO HELP. JUST STAY CALM.

MA'AM? LIKE HE SAID, WE'RE HERE TO HELP, BUT THAT MEANS WE NEED YOU TO COOPERATE.

BRISK SAID TO GO AWAY, FARTBRAINS!

WE JUST WANT TO GET THE KID OUT OF THIS SITUATION AND SAFE ON THE GROUND. IF WE HAVE TO SHOOT YOU TO DO THAT, MA'AM, WE WILL.

FOR HER SAKE, LETS NOT MAKE IT COME TO THAT. PUT YOUR HANDS BEHIND YOUR HEAD AND SIT DOWN.

GET THE FUCK BACK!!

MEGAN, PLEASE! DO AS THEY SAY!

FOR SUSAN'S SAKE, PLEASE JUST COME DOWN!

COME ON, LADIES, WE CAN TALK ABOUT THIS MORE WHEN WE'RE DOWN FROM HERE, ALL RIGHT?

MEGAN?

`MEMBER?

WE'RE ALREADY DEAD...

DON'T LET GO OF ME FOR ANYTHING, SUSAN...

I WON'T. I LOVE YOU, BRISK...

MA'AM? NO!!

PUT SUSAN DOWN RIGHT N-







INTERMISSION

MOTHER?

UM, EXCUSE ME, MISS ALL MIGHTY, BUT THE BOYS AND I ARE READY TO BEGIN.

OH! LUCY! GOOD, COME IN HERE.

JUST FINE-TUNING THE DESIGN! WHAT DO YOU THINK?

HRM...

DO YOU WANT MY HONEST OPINION?

THAT'S WHY I ASKED, SWEETIE PIE.

BE GENTLE THOUGH. I BRUISE EASY.

YOU SHOULD LOSE THE TREE.

OH? BUT THE TREE IS THE WHOLE POINT.

YOU KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THE TREE STAYS IN THAT GARDEN. ITS NOT A QUESTION OF "IF", ITS A QUESTION OF "WHEN".

YOU KNOW, THE BOYS CAN WAIT. LETS YOU AND I TAKE A WALK. CAN WE?

OF COURSE.

THE TREE CAN'T BE ALL. TELL ME EVERYTHING THAT'S BOTHERING YOU ABOUT THIS PROJECT, LUCY.

WELL, FIRST OF ALL, YOU ALREADY GAVE ME A NAME.

LUCIFER, REMEMBER?

CALLING YOU LUCY USED TO MAKE YOU SMILE. I GUESS I'D JUST LIKE TO SEE YOU DO IT MORE OFTEN.

IF YOU WANT ME TO STOP, THOUGH, I WILL.

I WANT YOU TO FORGET ABOUT THE TREE.

BUT DEAR, WHY GIVE THEM FREE WILL IF WE DON'T ALLOW THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO TEST THEIR JUDGEMENT?

WHY GIVE THEM FREE WILL AT ALL?

I DON'T HAVE THE SAME KIND OF FAITH IN THESE CREATURES YOU'RE PLANNING. IN THEM, FREE WILL IS A FLAW.

WAS IT A FLAW WHEN I MADE YOU? IF I'D MADE YOU A MINDLESS DRONE WHO ALWAYS AGREED, WHERE WOULD I GO TO HAVE THESE WONDERFUL CONVERSATIONS?

WE WERE DIFFERENT! YOU'RE PLANNING TO HIDE YOURSELF FROM THEM TO LET THEM CHOOSE YOU OR NOT ON THEIR OWN.

IF YOU CHALLENGE THEM, THEY WILL DO GREAT THINGS. YOU'LL SEE.

MANKIND WILL PROVE TO BE A BLESSING ONE DAY.

IF YOU GIVE THEM FREE WILL WITHOUT DEFINITIVELY PROVING YOUR EXISTENCE, YOU'RE INVITING THEM TO HURT THEMSELVES. TO MAKE WAR ON EACH OTHER. TO DENOUNCE YOU WITH EVERY BREATH THEY CAN TAKE. AT LEAST MAKE YOURSELF KNOWN TO THEM!

THAT WOULDN'T BE FAIR. IT WILL BE THEIR CHOICE. IT WILL BE IN THEIR POWER TO DO GOOD OR EVIL WITHOUT ME. WE WILL LEARN A LOT FROM MAN.

LEARN WHAT? YOU ALREADY KNOW ALL THAT THERE IS TO KNOW! YOU FRUSTRATE ME TO NO END SOMETIMES, MOM

A SMART PERSON CAN STAY IN A SINGLE ROOM AND WILL EVENTUALLY KNOW ALL THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT THAT ROOM.

BUT A WISE PERSON WILL KNOW THAT THERE IS MORE TO LEARN ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR.

BUT, AGAIN, WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME WHAT'S REALLY BOTHERING YOU ABOUT ALL THIS, LUCIFER...

WHEN YOU MADE ME AND THE OTHER ANGELS, WE KNEW OF YOU FROM OUR CONCEPTION.

YOU DIDN'T TEST US LIKE YOU'LL BE TESTING THESE MEN AND WOMEN. I THINK YOU QUESTION OUR LOYALTY.

I THINK YOU MEAN FOR THESE CREATURES TO EVENTUALLY REPLACE US...

OH LUCIFER, PUSSYCAT, THAT'S JUST NOT TRUE.

I LOVE YOU JUST LIKE I LOVE ALL OF MY CHILDREN.

BUT... YOU KNOW I'M ONLY EVER TRULY HAPPY WHEN I CREATE.

AND I ALSO KNOW THAT YOU'RE THE SAME WITH YOUR MUSIC.

I KNOW YOU'RE NOT COMPLETELY ON-BOARD WITH THIS PROJECT, BUT I'LL NEED YOUR HELP FOR THIS TO GO OFF WITHOUT A HITCH.

WHAT DO YOU SAY, LUCY? HELP MAM OUT?

THAT WASN'T A SMILE, WAS IT?

NOT AT ALL.

LIAR...

WELL, IF WE'RE REALLY GOING THROUGH WITH THIS, WE SHOULD TALK ABOUT HOW IT WILL ALL END.

YES. WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WHEN YOU FINALLY COME TO END IT ALL, MANY OF THESE CREATURES WILL FIND IT UNFAIR. THE YOUTH AND SUCH WILL CLAIM THEY DID NOT HAVE FAIR TIME TO KNOW AND ACCEPT YOU.

THERE WOULD BE SOME TRUTH IN THAT, I'M AFRAID. DO YOU HAVE A SOLUTION?

I THINK SO. WHAT IF, THROUGH THE COURSE OF HISTORY, SOME MISSED THEIR TIME TO DIE?

THESE UNDYING WOULD NO LONGER AGE OR HAVE CHILDREN. IT WOULD CAUSE SOME UNNATURAL STRESS ON THE ONES CHOSEN.

BUT THE END RESULT WOULD BE, WHEN IT ALL FINALLY ENDED, THE YOUNGEST PERSON ON EARTH WOULD BE AT LEAST A CENTURY OLD. AMPLE TIME TO KNOW YOU.

YOU ALWAYS WERE SO POETIC. ITS A GOOD PLAN. I'LL PASS IT ON TO GABE SO HE CAN IMPLEMENT IT.

WAIT!

NO! I WAS WRONG, ITS A TERRIBLE PLAN! WHAT IF A CHILD—

PUSSYCAT? YOU WORRY TOO MUCH. JUST CALM YOURSELF.

IF IT HAPPENS, WE WILL SEE A MAN OR WOMAN RISE TO THE CHALLENGE. YOU'LL SEE.

SHALL WE GET STARTED? I FIGURE IT WILL TAKE ONLY SIX DAYS TO LAY THE GROUNDWORK.

OR FOUR HUNDRED BILLION YEARS...

DEPENDS ON WHO'S COUNTING.

AND HOW, FOR THAT MATTER.

BIG

WELL...

BIG

LET THERE BE LIGHT!

BIG BANG

IT LOOKS OKAY.

...I GUESS...

MEGAN I DON'T SEE ANYBODY

NNRGH

NMH

MEGAN! MEGAN, YOU OKAY? WHAT DO I DO?! HOW DO I—

SUSAN...MNGH

PLEASE... JUST CALM... DOWWNGHNN!

B-BUT... BUT MEGAN!!

IT'LL BE OKAY

S-SUSAN...T-THE SCARY MAN SAID.... SAID THEY'D GET BETTER.

REMEMBER? W-WE'RE NOT DEAD. EVERYTHING... WILL BE OKAY.

SHE'S RIGHT, DARLING.

DON'T YOU WORRY ONE BIT. YOUR FRIEND IS GOING TO BE JUST FINE.

MEGAN? HIS EYES...

NN— WHO ARE YOU?!

IF YOU TWO WERE ALIVE, YOUR FRIEND WOULD NEVER WALK AGAIN.

BUT, LIKE YOU ARE, I'VE NO DOUBT YOU'LL ONLY BE INCONVENIENCED FOR TWO OR THREE DAYS.

NN— WHAT DO YOU WANT?

SAW THAT JUMP. EVEN WITH YOUR AFFLICTION IT MUST HAVE TAKEN ALL YOUR COURAGE, NO DOUBT.

YOUR LEGS BUCKLE WHEN YA HIT THE WATER OR WHEN YA HIT THE BOTTOM OF THE RIVER?

GO AWAY!

OH, I APOLOGIZE, THERE. MY INSUFFERABLY CURIOUS NATURE AGAIN.

PLEASE FORGIVE A DEAD GENTLEMAN

YOU GALS CAN'T WAIT HERE TIL YOU HEAL. YOU'LL BE SPOTTED FOR SURE

I'VE A HIDEAWAY WHERE I LIVE ALL ALONE. NO ONE EVER COMES BY, I PROMISE.

AND, AS YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED, I'VE NOTHING TO GAIN FROM TURNING YOU IN.

ALL RIGHT...

THANK YOU.

LITTLE LADY? YOU DON'T MIND IF I GIVE YOUR FRIEND A PIGGYBACK RIDE, DO YOU?

NUH-UH

WAIT, CAN YOU EVEN DO THAT?

OH SURE, WITHOUT THE BODY IT BECOMES A DIFFERENT PROCESS, 'COURSE.

BUT THE SPIRIT HAS ALWAYS BEEN STRONGER THAN DUST AN' AIR.

THANK YOU. I DON'T KNOW WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF YOU HADN'T SHOWN UP.

I DO. S'WISE I SHOWED UP.

'SIDES, THIS WAY I GET TO HELP A CUTE LIL' ANGEL.

AN' I GET A REMINDER OF WHAT IT FEELS LIKE T'HAVE A LOVELY WOMAN AGAINST MAH BACK

WELL, THIS WOMAN DOESN'T FEEL VERY LOVELY RIGHT NOW...

DON'T CARE. BEAUTY BEING IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER AN' ALL, YOUR PERSONAL OPINION IN THIS MATTER DOESN'T COUNT FOR DIDDLY-SQUAT. DOES IT, CUTIE-PIE?

SORRY, BRISK. ITS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOMER. NO CHOICE.

WELL, THANK YOU. I'M MEGAN, BY THE WAY AND SHE'S SUSAN.

DELIGHTED. MY NAME'S ORDIN.

HOW FAR IS IT?

JUST UP AHEAD. A CAVERN DUG INTO THE ROCK.

DON'T WORRY. I'VE HAD PLENTY OF TIME TO FIX'ER UP. IT OUGHT TO BE JUS' FINE FOR THE COMPANY OF YOUNG LADIES.

I'VE HAD NOTHING BUT TIME ON MY HANDS AND ALL...

YOU LIVE UNDER A BRIDGE?

IS THAT A PROBLEM? YA'LL DON'T LOOK LIKE BILLY GOATS T'ME.

COME ON, MEGAN! I WANNA SEE!

WELL...

THIS PLACE IS VERY IMPRESSIVE.

THANK YOU. AH DID A LITTLE CONSTRUCTION WHEN I WAS ALIVE. WHICH WAS SOME TIME AGO.

HOW LONG AGO, MISTER ORDIN?

WELL, LITTLE LADY, MOST FOLKS DON'T LIKE TO BRAG 'BOUT THEIR AGE, SO LET'S JUST SAY OLD ENOUGH TO TAKE SLIGHT OFFENSE TO YOU TWO HOPPIN' OFF A BRIDGE I HELPED BUILD.

NOW, I BET YOU TWO ARE COLD IN THOSE WET CLOTHES.

YES...

FREEEEEZING!

SO LET ME JUST DUCK IN HERE AND GRAB SOME SPARE ROBES YOU CAN BORROW.

SUSAN? YOU NEVER LEAVE MY SIGHT WHILE WE'RE HERE. UNDERSTAND?

HUH?

OKAY, LADIES...

HERE YOU ARE, SUSAN. NOW, THE BATHROOM IS THROUGH THAT DOOR. GO AHEAD AND START YOURSELF A BATH AND YOU'LL FEEL WARM IN NO TIME.

WAIT A MINUTE, SUSAN...

SIR, WOULD YOU OPEN THAT DOOR SO I CAN SEE INSIDE?

OF COURSE, MA'AM.

STATE OF TH' ART. FER BATHROOMS ANYWAY. TOILET'S NOT NECESSARY FOR ME, BUT I LIKE BEIN' THOROUGH. SINK, MIRROR, SHOWER, LINEN CLOSET, HOT AN' COLD RUNNING WATER AND JUST ONE DOOR.

THANK YOU.

GO AHEAD, SUSAN.

THANK YOU!

I HOPE I DON'T SEEM UNGRATEFUL...

NO MA'AM, NOT EVEN SLIGHTLY. NOW... LET'S SEE...

FOR YOU, I HAVE A FRESH ROBE. I APOLOGIZE IN ADVANCE FOR ANY SIZE TROUBLES.

I'M SURE IT WILL BE FINE.

"FINE" IS ONE OF THOSE STRANGE LITTLE WORDS THAT HARDLY EVER MEANS WHAT ITS MEANT TO.

I MEANT I'M IN NO POSITION TO GRIPE ABOUT ANYTHING TO YOU.

DO GRIPE, SHOULD THE MOOD STRIKE YOU.

I ALSO HAVE FOR YOU, A MAGIC BLANKET.

MAGIC...?

INDEED! NOW WATCH CLOSELY.

IF I TAKE THIS CORNER WITH ONE HAND, AND THEN, WITH THE OTHER, TAKE THIS CORNER.... ARE YOU WATCHING CLOSELY? NOW I'LL SPREAD MY ARMS...

MAGICALLY! I AM COMPLETELY BLINDED AND YOUR PURITY IS PROTECTED AS YOU DRY OFF AND CHANGE.

THANK YOU FOR LAUGHING AT THAT

I WAS PRETTY CERTAIN I WAS GOING T'MAKE A HORSE'S ASS OF MYSELF. PARDON MY LANGUAGE.

NO. I REALLY NEEDED THAT LAUGH.

THEN A HIGHLIGHT OF MY AFTERLIFE WILL BE HAVING PROVIDED AN EXQUISITE LADY WITH SOMETHING SHE REALLY NEEDED.

YOUR DAUGHTER IS VERY LUCKY TO HAVE YOU, MA'AM.

OH, SUSAN ISN'T MY—

WAIT. WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

I UNDERSTAND EXACTLY WHAT THE ROUTINE WITH THE BATHROOM WAS ABOUT. YOU JUST KEEP ON DOING WHATEVER YOU CAN TO PROTECT THAT LITTLE MISS.

THANK YOU.

YOU GALS COME FAR?

YES.

WHERE YA HEADED?

NEW YORK.

NOT TOO FAR T'GO, THEN.

SOMETHING WRONG?

...NO.

I WAS JUST A LITTLE SHOCKED TO SEE MY FEET POINTING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION AGAIN.

THE HEALIN'S QUICK, THAT'S SURE ENOUGH.

YOU CAN DROP THE BLANKET NOW, ORDIN.

YOU KNOW, THERE ARE SEVERAL PHRASES IN SEVERAL LANGUAGES THAT CORRECTLY EMPHASIZE THE ELEGANT GRACE AND WONDER OF A BROWN-FURRED LADY.

UNFORTUNATELY, I DON'T KNOW THAT YOU'D UNDERSTAND THEM.

SO WE SHALL SETTLE FOR "RAVISHINGLY BEAUTIFUL"

PFFT! NOT ME...

YES, YOU. NOW STAY STILL

HOW IS THIS? THAT HURT YA?

A LITTLE, BUT NOTHING LIKE BEFORE.

HERE?

NO. YOU DON'T HAVE TO-

AN' WHEN I SQUEEZE...?

ITS FINE. PLEASE ST-

WHAT ABOUT WHEN I-

STOP IT! RIGHT NOW!

WHOA, EASY NOW! I'M JUS' CHECKIN' YOUR PROGRESS, MA'AM. MEANT NOTHIN' BY IT...

IT'S ALL RIGHT. JUST... I'M NOT VERY COMFORTABLE BEING TOUCHED LIKE THAT

WELL, WHAT REFINED WOMAN IS? APOLOGY ACCEPTED.

YOU GOT A BIT TO GO YET. YOU SHOULD STAY TIL NIGHTFALL.

DON'T LAUGH, MEGAN...

I DID THE BEST WITH WHAT I HAD.

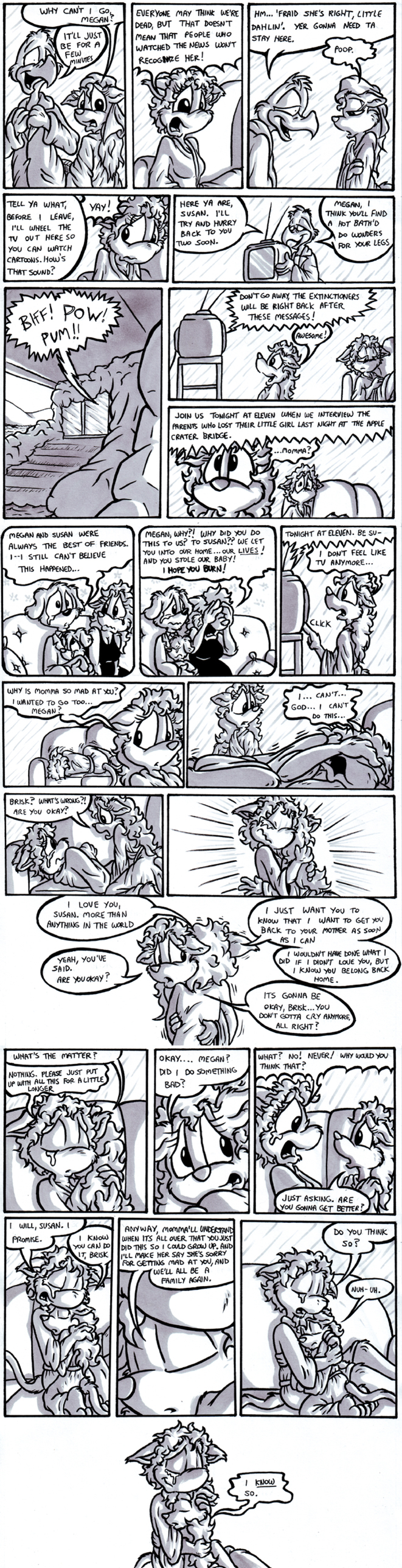
I'M NOT LAUGHING AT YOU, SUSAN.

I'M LAUGHING AT THE ROBE FOR WEARING SUCH A TINY GIRL.

I THINK I'LL STEP OFF NOW AND FIND YOU TWO SOME DRY CLOTHES. YOU WANT TO HELP PICK THEM OUT, LITTLE LADY?

YEAH!

No!


WHY CAN'T I GO, MEGAN?
IT'LL JUST BE FOR A FEW MINUTES
EVERYONE MAY THINK WE'RE DEAD, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT PEOPLE WHO WATCHED THE NEWS WON'T RECOGNIZE HER!
HM... 'FRAID SHE'S RIGHT, LITTLE DAHLIN'. YER GONNA NEED TA STAY HERE.
POOP.
TELL YA WHAT, BEFORE I LEAVE, I'LL WHEEL THE TV OUT HERE SO YOU CAN WATCH CARTOONS. HOW'S THAT SOUND?
YAY!
HERE YA ARE, SUSAN. I'LL TRY AND HURRY BACK TO YOU TWO SOON.
MEGAN, I THINK YOU'LL FIND A HOT BATH'D DO WONDERS FOR YOUR LEGS
BIFF! POW! PUM!!
DON'T GO AWAY, THE EXTINCTIONERS WILL BE RIGHT BACK AFTER THESE MESSAGES!
AWESOME!
JOIN US TONIGHT AT ELEVEN WHEN WE INTERVIEW THE PARENTS WHO LOST THEIR LITTLE GIRL LAST NIGHT AT THE APPLE CRATER BRIDGE.
...MOMMA?
MEGAN AND SUSAN WERE ALWAYS THE BEST OF FRIENDS. I--I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE THIS HAPPENED...
MEGAN, WHY?! WHY DID YOU DO THIS TO US? TO SUSAN?? WE LET YOU INTO OUR HOME... OUR LIVES! AND YOU STOLE OUR BABY! I HOPE YOU BURN!
TONIGHT AT ELEVEN. BE SU-
I DON'T FEEL LIKE TV ANYMORE...
CLICK
WHY IS MOMMA SO MAD AT YOU? I WANTED TO GO TOO... MEGAN?
I... CAN'T... GOD... I CAN'T DO THIS...
BRISK? WHAT'S WRONG?! ARE YOU OKAY?
I LOVE YOU, SUSAN. MORE THAN ANYTHING IN THE WORLD
YEAH, YOU'VE SAID. ARE YOU OKAY?
I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I WANT TO GET YOU BACK TO YOUR MOTHER AS SOON AS I CAN
I WOULDN'T HAVE DONE WHAT I DID IF I DIDN'T LOVE YOU, BUT I KNOW YOU BELONG BACK HOME.
ITS GONNA BE OKAY, BRISK... YOU DON'T GOTTA CRY ANYMORE ALL RIGHT?
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
NOTHING. PLEASE JUST PUT UP WITH ALL THIS FOR A LITTLE LONGER.
OKAY.... MEGAN? DID I DO SOMETHING BAD?
WHAT? NO! NEVER! WHY WOULD YOU THINK THAT?
JUST ASKING. ARE YOU GONNA GET BETTER?
I WILL, SUSAN. I PROMISE.
I KNOW YOU CAN DO IT, BRISK.
ANYWAY, MOMMA'LL UNDERSTAND WHEN ITS ALL OVER. THAT YOU JUST DID THIS SO I COULD GROW UP. AND I'LL MAKE HER SAY SHE'S SORRY FOR GETTING MAD AT YOU, AND WE'LL ALL BE A FAMILY AGAIN.
DO YOU THINK SO?
NUH-UH.
I KNOW SO.

WE'LL LEAVE WHEN IT GETS DARK. THAT WAY THERE'S LESS OF A CHANCE WE'LL BE SEEN

RIGHT

NEW YORK IS JUST ON THE OTHER SIDE OF APPLE CRATER LAKE. LUCKILY WE JUST NEED TO PASS THROUGH THE SUBURBS AND NOT THE CITY.

WILL IT TAKE LONG?

IF WE WALK ALL NIGHT, WE SHOULD MAKE IT JUST AS THE SUN COMES UP.

WHAT'RE ALL THOSE BOATS DOING OUT THERE, MEGAN?

THEY'RE LOOKING FOR US, HON.

THAT'S STUPID...

THEY WON'T FIND US WITH A BOAT

HEY MEGAN? ORDIN CAME BACK!

OKAY, I'LL BE RIGHT OUT.

ACTUALLY, AH WAS HOPING AH COULD JOIN YOU BEFORE YOU HAD TO LEAVE.

WHERE IS SUSAN?

DISTRACTED. DOODLIN' IN HER LIL' BOOK.

IS THIS-- IS THIS HOW I PAY FOR MY STAY HERE...?!

OH GOODNESS. MEGAN, IF AH WERE A WEAKER MAN, YA'D WOUND ME.

BUT... IF IT HELPS T'THINK OF IT THAT WAY....

NOT SQUIRMIN'? GOOD FOR YOU. DADDY HAD A LITTLE FUN WITH YA, DID HE?

WHY, WHAT'S THE MATTER, MEGAN? HAVEN'T AH BENT OVER BACKWARDS TO BE HELPFUL SO FAR? AH JUST WANT TO BE NICE TO YOU...

YOU JUST NEED TO TRUST ME...

OKAY.....

SUCH A HARD TRIP FOR YOU. YET YOU'RE STILL GOING. THERE ISN'T ANYBODY IN THE WORLD WHO CAN UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'VE GOT ON YOUR SHOULDERS, IS THERE?

...NO...

I UNDERSTAND. YOU FEEL LIKE ITS TOO MUCH. LIKE YOU JUST CAN'T DO IT.

YES...

YOU WANT SOMEONE ELSE TO TAKE CHARGE FOR AWHILE. THEY CAN BE THE BAD GUY FOR ONCE AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING.

...YES...

WELL ALL RIGHT, THEN.

I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE, LITTLE LADY.

SHH... DON'T YOU MAKE A SOUND, NOW. SUSAN DOESN'T HAVE TO KNOW YOU'RE A WHORE.

YA CAN JUMP OFF A GOD DAMN BRIDGE, BUT YA CAN'T EVEN SUMMON THE STONES TA TAKE IT IN THE ASS?!

GET OUT. I WANT YOU OUTTA THAT TUB AND OUT OF MY DAMNED HOME!

SLAM!

BETTEP PACK IT UP, LITTLE LADY. I THINK YOUR FRIEND IS READY TO GO. BUT YOU BE SURE TO COME BACK AND VISIT ME.

YOU CAN EVEN COME ALL BY YOURSELF IF YOU WANT.

OKAY, ORDIN! THANKS!

SUSAN! WE'RE LEAVING RIGHT NOW!

PFFT! DON'T YOU WANNA GET DRESSED FIRST, BRISK?

NO! WE'RE GOING **NOW**!

MA'AM?

CAN'T LET YA JUST RUN OFF WITH MY TOW—

FUCK YOU! YOU RAPIST SODOMIZING SON OF A BITCH! FIND A NEW HOME BECAUSE THE NEXT TIME WE SEE THE REAPER, YOUR ASS IS HIS!

MEGAN!

SLAM!

HMF....

TRY AN' DO SOMEONE A FAVOR. FUCKIN' WOMEN.

AH, MEGAN.

MEGAN, MEGAN, MEGAN

I'LL HATE YOU FOR THE REST OF MAH-

WELL-

I GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TAH HATE YOU FOREVER.

BE TOUGH, BUT I S'POSE I'LL MANAGE...

SEND THE REAPER AFTER ME? PAH! HELL IS YOUR DISGUSTING CUNT!

IT WAS HARD ENOUGH HOLDIN' MAH LUNCH DOWN EVEN TRYIN' TAH TAKE YA THROUGH THE BACK DOOR.

BUT SUSAN.... SWEET LITTLE SUSAN, WHEREVER YOU ARE, PLEASE FORGIVE ME. AH COULDN'T MELT THAT BITCH'S HEART IN TIME FOR US TO BE ALONE

YOUR LITTLE FLOWER MUST BE SO SNUG AN' TIGHT.

AH WOULD'A BEEN REAL GENTLE. AH BET AH COULD HAVE GOTTEN YOU TA LOVE IT

AH'DA PLOWED YOU TIL YA BLED AND BEGGED ME FOR MORE

WE'LL GET YOU ANOTHER COLORING BOOK SOMEWHERE, OKAY?

O -- OKAY...

MEGAN? WHERE ARE WE?

I DON'T KNOW, SUSAN.

I'M COLD.

ME TOO. WE'LL BE OKAY.

JUST KEEP MOVING

ORDIN WAS SO NICE BEFORE, HOW COME HE HAD TO DO THAT?

I DON'T KNOW, HONEY, TRY NOT TO THINK ABOUT IT.

MEGAN? HOW'RE WE GOING TO FIND PEG?

SUSAN.....

I'M JUST ASKING! HOW DO WE —

I DON'T KNOW, OKAY?!

I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING!!

ARE YOU HAPPY NOW?! JESUS CHRIST!

I'M JUST-

...SUSAN?

SUSAN, NO... I DIDN'T-- I MEAN--

SUSAN!

SUSAN! WAIT!

M'SORRY! DON'T YELL AT ME ANYMORE! I'M SORRY I MADE YOU MAD!

NO...SHH, NO SUSAN, I'M SORRY. I'M NOT MAD AT YOU, OKAY? I'M JUST SO TIRED...

M'SORRY MEGAN...

HEY?

ARE YOU TWO OKAY?

125

UHM...

...NO.

COME INSIDE. YOU SHOULDN'T BE OUT IN THIS RAIN.

THANK YOU.

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ARE YOU OKAY? DO YOU NEED ME TO CALL THE POLICE?

NO, PLEASE. WE JUST NEED A PLACE TO STAY FOR THE NIGHT.

YOU'RE BOTH SOAKING WET, LET ME SEE IF I CAN FIND YOU SOMETHING DRY.

IN THE MORNING, DO YOU HAVE A PLACE YOU CAN GO?

YES, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LAKE.

HMM... I HAVE TO CROSS THE BRIDGE ANYWAY TO GET TO CLASS. I'LL GIVE YOU A LIFT IF YOU WANT.

OKAY, MA'AM, WE LOOK ABOUT THE SAME SIZE, SO I HOPE THESE FIT.

MY NEPHEW LEFT THESE LAST TIME MY SISTER'S FAMILY VISITED. I HOPE THEY'LL WORK FOR YOU.

THANKS A LOT!

THANK YOU FOR THIS. I CAN'T BEGIN TO TELL YOU HOW MUCH THIS MEANS TO US.

I'M JUST GLAD I COULD HELP. YOU CAN SLEEP ON THE COUCH. I'M SORRY THE TV DOESN'T WORK, BUT FIXING IT ISN'T IN A STUDENT'S BUDGET.

ANYHOW, GOODNIGHT. SEE YOU BOTH IN THE MORNING.

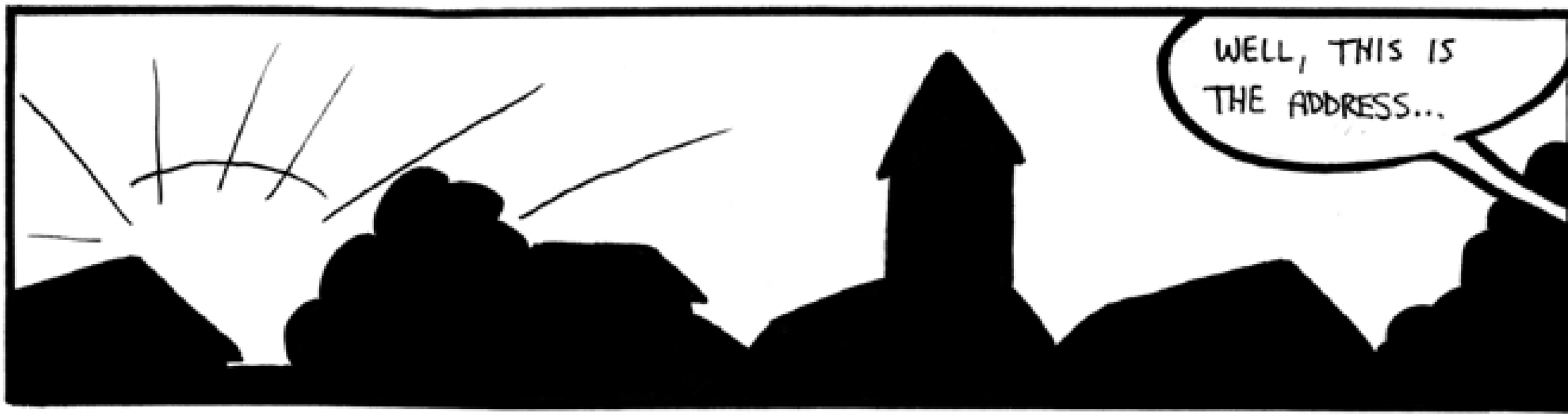
NIGHT.

DOES THIS MEAN WE'LL SEE PEG TOMORROW?

HOPEFULLY YES. ARE YOU GETTING TIRED?

NO WAY!

HEH, ME NEITHER


WELL, THIS IS THE ADDRESS...


ARE YOU SURE YOU'LL BOTH BE OKAY FROM HERE?
WE'LL BE FINE. YOU'VE HELPED US SO MUCH AS IT IS ALREADY. WE'LL NEVER FORGET YOU.




WELL... I SUPPOSE WE JUST KNOCK, HUH?


NO NEED, MEGAN, COME RIGHT IN.
COME ON NOW, YOU'VE ALREADY COME THIS FAR. WHAT'S A FEW MORE STEPS?

ERR... ARE YOU PEG?

MY NAME IS ABBAGALE, ACTUALLY. "PEG" IS JUST A STAGE NAME.

IT KEEPS THE WEIRDOS FROM BURNING THE HOUSE DOWN.

BUT YOU CAN JUST CALL ME "ABBA"

RIGHT

HI, ABBA! I'M SUSAN!

AND THIS IS BRISK!

SHE'S MY FAVORITEST PERSON IN THE WHOLE WIDE COTTON-PICKIN' WORLD!

MY GOODNESS! SUCH AN ESTEEMED RANKING! MEGAN, YOU MUST BE VERY PROUD.

AFTER ALL, I'VE HEARD I'M VERY PRIVELEGED TO MEET YOU BOTH.

DID YOU TELL THOSE PEOPLE TO MEET US ON THE HIGHWAY?

YES, IN FACT, I DID.

BUT I'M AFRAID THAT "PEG" IS ONLY AN ACTING SECRETARY TO THE "REAL THING"...

MY TRUTHS COME TO ME IN A DIFFERENT WAY.

SPECIFICALLY, MY TRUTHS COME FROM THE "SEVENTH WALL"

UH...

NEATO!

...YOU TALK TO A WALL?

YES. A WALL NAMED DAVE.

I SEE... SO WHAT IS "DAVE" TELLING YOU NOW?

HE IS WONDERING IF THE CONVERSATION WE ARE HAVING IS NECESSARY TO THE PLOT AND HE HAS DECIDED IT IS NOT, BUT HE WILL LEAVE IT IN BECAUSE IT COULD SET UP A FUTURE TRUTH HE MAY OR MAY NOT WRITE. A NEW "ARC."

FLOODS AND RAINBOWS KINDA ARCS?

I REALLY DON'T KNOW.

IS THE SEVENTH WALL... ERR... FRIENDLY?

NOT ALWAYS. HE'S OCCASIONALLY VERY NASTY, BUT NOT ALWAYS. IT MAKES HIM FEEL GUILTY AND HIS HEAD HURT. HE FEELS HIS EXISTENCE HAS NO MEANING.

DAVE IS SORRY ABOUT WHAT HE PUT YOU THROUGH ON THE BRIDGE. HE SAYS HE DOESN'T LIKE TO HURT YOU AND HE KNOWS HOW EMPTY HIS APOLOGIES MUST SOUND.

...A WALL APOLOGIZED TO ME?

ITS HARD TO EXPLAIN—

OH! HE'S CUT SOME OF MY LINES.

...I WONDER WHAT I WAS GOING TO SAY...

OH WELL, WE OUGHT TO BE MOVING ON.

WHA—

TELL THEM I'M READY NOW, ABBA.

....WHO WAS THAT, ABBA?

THAT? WHY, THAT WOULD BE THE REAL THING.

GO ON INTO THE KITCHEN, I'LL JUST BE TALKING TO THE WALL.

HMM? OH, SHAME! YOU KNOW I CAN'T ALWAYS REPEAT WHAT YOU SAY.

IT WOULD BE IMPROPER. FUN, BUT IMPROPER.

HMM, THAT WAS AN EDIT TOO...

MEGAN AND SUSAN...

ITS GOOD TO FINALLY MEET YOU

ARE YOU A—

YES, MEGAN

YES I AM.

WE'VE —

- COME A LONG WAY TO FIND ME?

STOP -

- FINISHING YOUR SENTENCES?

I'LL TRY

NOW, SUSAN?

LET'S TALK ABOUT RALPHIE.


BACK HOME YOU HAVE A BLUE TEDDY BEAR THAT YOU LOVE MORE THAN ANY OTHER TOY... RALPHIE, RIGHT?
YEAH!
YOU NAMED HIM RALPHIE AS YOUR SECOND CHOICE BECAUSE YOUR PARENTS DIDN'T APPROVE OF YOU CALLING HIM—
ERR...
...OH, SUSAN.
HEE...
MISTER "BOTTOMLESS POOP"?
PFFHA HAHA!
ONE DAY, YOUR BROTHER, BRAD, STOLE RALPHIE AND THREW HIM IN THE STREET. RALPHIE WAS RUN OVER AND TORN INTO PIECES.
BUT I CAN SEE RALPHIE NOW, STITCHED UP AND AS GOOD AS NEW. YOUR BROTHER IS HOLDING HIM TIGHTLY AND HE'S THINKING OF YOU.
BUT I CAN'T SEE HOW RALPHIE GOT OFF THE ROAD...
MOMMY MADE HIM BETTER.
OHH, NOW I SEE YOUR MOTHER STITCHING RALPHIE UP WHILE YOU WERE SAD AT SCHOOL.
AND LITTLE JOEY JUST WON'T LEAVE YOUR HAIR ALONE.
I HAVE THE BESTEST MOMMY IN THE WORLD, HUH?
I'D LIKE TO THINK MY MOTHER WASN'T TOO BAD EITHER.
NOW, MEGAN - ER, WELL, THIS IS — THIS MAY SOUND STRANGE, BUT...
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN TWENTY-THREE?
OH, A BIT OVER THREE YEARS NOW...
STRANGE. I ALSO SEE HOW YOU DIED.
DAVE SAID NOT TO TALK ABOUT THAT!
WHY WOULD HE TELL ME NOT TO TALK ABOUT IT?
HE WOULD JUST KEEP ME FROM SAYING IT.
OOH! THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION.
MAYBE HE JUST THINKS ITS FUNNY, ABBY.
OH! WELL, MAYBE... HMM. THAT DEVIL...
IS ABBAGALE—
-YES. PERFECTLY SANE.

NOW, MEGAN, YOU RECIEVED THE NICKNAME "BRISK" RUNNING TRACK IN HIGH SCHOOL.

YEAH, BUT YOU COULD HAVE READ ABOUT THAT IN ANY—

—BUT NOT ABOUT THE FACT THAT, AT THE START, ON THAT VERY RACE YOU EARNED THAT NAME, SARA DECKER YANKED YOUR TAIL. IT SHOT YOUR BALANCE AND YOU FELL FLAT ON YOUR FACE. NO ONE SAW HER DO IT AND YOU TOLD NO ONE ABOUT IT.

YOU WERE SO MAD THAT YOU JUMPED UP AND SPENT ALL OF YOUR ENERGY CATCHING UP WITH HER FROM HALFWAY AROUND THE TRACK.

YOU EVEN GAVE MS. DECKER A SPECIAL SALUTE AS YOU BLEW PAST HER.

YOU HAD NOTHING LEFT TO GIVE, BUT THE CROWD SEEING A GIRL GO FROM LAST TO FIRST KEPT YOU GOING.

WHEN YOU CROSSED THE FINISH LINE, YOU COLLAPSED ONTO THE SAME SPOT YOU STARTED FROM.

WOW!!

I WAS PRETTY TIRED AFTER THAT, KIDDO.

ON TO WHY YOU ARE HERE. YOU WERE SENT TO FIND ME BY SOMEONE I SHOULD KNOW, BUT I CAN'T TELL WHO... THIS IS ALL ABOUT SUSAN, THOUGH...

HE SENT US BECAUSE —

HOLD THAT THOUGHT, MEGAN. I HEAR THE MYSTIC SPIRITS CALLING ME...

oOoOoOoOoOoOoOo! ITS A MAN, FRIGHTENING IN APPEARANCE, BUT IMPORTANT IN SOME REGARD.

CUTE. I THOUGHT YOU SAID THAT YOU COULDN'T SEE HIM.

OH, MEGAN, I CAN'T. BUT YOU JUST TOLD ME IT WAS A MAN, AND EVERY TIME ONE OF US MENTIONED HIM, I SAW SUSAN'S FACE TURN SOUR.

THERE WERE OTHER CLUES I SAW IN THE REFLECTION OF THE DINNER PLATES AS I PUT THEM AWAY, OF COURSE.

SOMETIMES THE TRICKS THE FAKE PSYCHICS USE

CAN HELP US REAL ONES OUT.

ARLOEST? HE'S WONDERING IF YOUR INTRODUCTION WASN'T A TAD LONG.

TELL YOUR WALL TO STUFF IT.

OOH! THAT MIGHT MAKE HIM MAD...

THEN TELL HIM HE MADE ME SAY IT.

YOU KNOW... THERE'S A WORD FOR PEOPLE WHO CLAIM TO TALK TO GOD.

THEN ITS A GOOD THING ABBA ONLY TALKS TO DAVE, DON'T YOU THINK SO, MEGAN?

NOW THIS MAN WHO SENT YOU. HE WANTED ME TO FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR FUTURE?

NO. HE SAID TO ASK ABOUT THE PAST.

YOUR PAST. SPECIFICALLY, A PAST LIFE.

HM... WELL, I DIDN'T SEE THAT ONE COMING.

I THINK YOU'D BETTER TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU CAN, STARTING WITH WHAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU WERE TWENTY-THREE.

WELL, DAVE SAYS HE DOESN'T WANT TO GIVE ANYTHING AWAY...

WHICH MEANS EVERYTHING MEGAN HAS SAID IS TRUE

ITS A LITTLE UNBELIEVABLE

ITS THE TRUTH. I SWEAR IT IS.

I KNOW IT IS, MEGAN. ITS STILL UNBELIEVABLE. WE'RE WOMEN. WE CAN BELIEVE TWO CONTRADICTING POINTS AT ONCE.

NOW, WHAT ABOUT MY PAST LIFE DOES THE REAPER WANT ME TO TELL YOU?

HE SAID YOU KNOW A WAY TO ESCAPE THE AFTERLIFE.

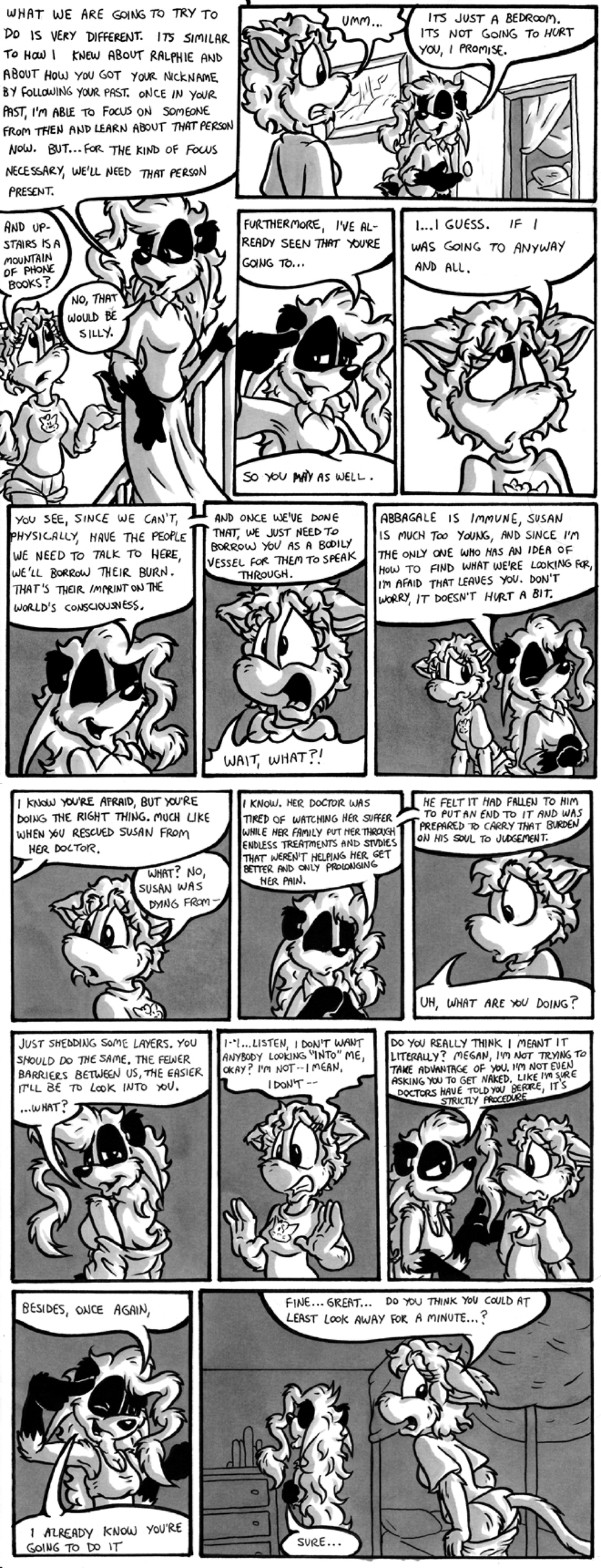
NOT THAT I CAN RECALL... ABBY, PLEASE WATCH AFTER SUSAN. I THINK MEGAN AND I HAD BETTER GO UPSTAIRS AND TALK.

MEGAN? FOLLOW ME.

SUSAN? WILL YOU BE OKAY WITHOUT ME FOR A BIT?

YEP! I'M GONNA STAY WITH ABBA AND SEE IF DAVE'LL TALK TO ME TOO!

OH, HE SAYS HE'D LOVE TO TALK TO YOU!


WHAT WE ARE GOING TO TRY TO DO IS VERY DIFFERENT. ITS SIMILAR TO HOW I KNEW ABOUT RALPHIE AND ABOUT HOW YOU GOT YOUR NICKNAME BY FOLLOWING YOUR PAST. ONCE IN YOUR PAST, I'M ABLE TO FOCUS ON SOMEONE FROM THEN AND LEARN ABOUT THAT PERSON NOW. BUT... FOR THE KIND OF FOCUS NECESSARY, WE'LL NEED THAT PERSON PRESENT.
UMM...
ITS JUST A BEDROOM. ITS NOT GOING TO HURT YOU, I PROMISE.
AND UP-STAIRS IS A MOUNTAIN OF PHONE BOOKS?
NO, THAT WOULD BE SILLY.
FURTHERMORE, I'VE ALREADY SEEN THAT YOU'RE GOING TO...
SO YOU MAY AS WELL.
I...I GUESS. IF I WAS GOING TO ANYWAY AND ALL.
YOU SEE, SINCE WE CAN'T, PHYSICALLY, HAVE THE PEOPLE WE NEED TO TALK TO HERE, WE'LL BORROW THEIR BURN. THAT'S THEIR IMPRINT ON THE WORLD'S CONSCIOUSNESS.
AND ONCE WE'VE DONE THAT, WE JUST NEED TO BORROW YOU AS A BODILY VESSEL FOR THEM TO SPEAK THROUGH.
WAIT, WHAT?!
ABBAGALE IS IMMUNE, SUSAN IS MUCH TOO YOUNG, AND SINCE I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS AN IDEA OF HOW TO FIND WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR, I'M AFAID THAT LEAVES YOU. DON'T WORRY, IT DOESN'T HURT A BIT.
I KNOW YOU'RE AFRAID, BUT YOU'RE DOING THE RIGHT THING. MUCH LIKE WHEN YOU RESCUED SUSAN FROM HER DOCTOR.
WHAT? NO, SUSAN WAS DYING FROM—
I KNOW. HER DOCTOR WAS TIRED OF WATCHING HER SUFFER WHILE HER FAMILY PUT HER THROUGH ENDLESS TREATMENTS AND STUDIES THAT WEREN'T HELPING HER GET BETTER AND ONLY PROLONGING HER PAIN.
HE FELT IT HAD FALLEN TO HIM TO PUT AN END TO IT AND WAS PREPARED TO CARRY THAT BURDEN ON HIS SOUL TO JUDGEMENT.
UH, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
JUST SHEDDING SOME LAYERS. YOU SHOULD DO THE SAME. THE FEWER BARRIERS BETWEEN US, THE EASIER IT'LL BE TO LOOK INTO YOU.
...WHAT?
I-I...LISTEN, I DON'T WANT ANYBODY LOOKING "INTO" ME, OKAY? I'M NOT--I MEAN, I DON'T--
DO YOU REALLY THINK I MEANT IT LITERALLY? MEGAN, I'M NOT TRYING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOU. I'M NOT EVEN ASKING YOU TO GET NAKED. LIKE I'M SURE DOCTORS HAVE TOLD YOU BEFORE, IT'S STRICTLY PROCEDURE.
BESIDES, ONCE AGAIN,
I ALREADY KNOW YOU'RE GOING TO DO IT
FINE... GREAT... DO YOU THINK YOU COULD AT LEAST LOOK AWAY FOR A MINUTE...?
SURE...

ALRIGHT, LOOK, I'M REALLY NOT OKAY WITH ALL OF THIS...

JUST PRETEND WE'RE A COUPLE OF GIRLS AT A SLUMBER PARTY TRYING TO DO OUR OWN SEANCE. YOU KNOW, WHEN YOU ASK THE SPIRITS WHO YOU'LL GO TO PROM WITH?

HEH! I NEVER DID THAT STUFF. ...BUT I GUESS ITS NOT LIKE I'VE GOT ANYTHING YOU'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE, RIGHT?

EXACTLY. AND IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE. WHEN YOU START DRAWING OUT SOMEONE'S PAST, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY'RE NERVOUS, YOU CATCH FLASHES OF MOMENTS THAT HAVE NEVER BEEN DISCUSSED IN POLITE COMPANY.

I THINK I WAS ABOUT SIXTEEN WHEN I STARTED EXPLORING MYSELF TOO. NEVER IN MY PARENTS' SHOWER, THOUGH. YOU'VE GOT ONE UP ON ME THERE.

OH — MY — GOD

SORRY ABOUT THAT, MEGAN...

WHY WOULD YOU EVEN BRING THAT UP?! AND IF YOU CAN FORETELL THINGS, CAN'T YOU JUST SEE HOW THIS WILL TURN OUT? I MEAN, LIKE YOU ALREADY DID WHEN YOU --

WHEN I SAID I KNEW YOU'D DO THIS? WELL... NO. I WAS BLUFFING.

WHAT?!

NOW CONCENTRATE. WE'RE DOING THIS FOR SUSAN.


NOW CLOSE YOUR EYES AND RELAX. FOCUS ON BREATHING IN AND OUT. LET YOURSELF SLIP.
NOW... OPEN YOUR EYES.
WHO AM I TALKING TO?
YOU JUST MET ME, MS. LOEST!
SUSAN LANCASTER, REMEMBER?
WELL HELLO, SUSAN. ARE YOU AND ABBY HAVING FUN?
WE'RE MAKING COOKIES. DAVE IS A JERKFACE, TOO!
IS MEGAN OKAY?
SHE'S FINE, DEAR. TELL ME SOMETHING...
IT WAS MEGAN WHO CAME UP WITH THE NAME "MR. BOTTOMLESS POOP", WASN'T IT?
HEE-YUP.
I NEED TO GO NOW, SO I WANT YOU TO THINK ABOUT YOUR TRIP.
VERY GOOD, SUSAN. GOODBYE, NOW.
BYE MS. LOEST.
NOW... WHO AM I TALKING TO?
NAMES REALLY AREN'T THAT IMPORTANT, ARE THEY, WHORE...?
I SEE. AND WHAT, EXACTLY, MAKES ME A WHORE?
PLEASE. A HALF-NAKED WOMAN WHO APPEARS IN FRONT'A A GENTLEMAN SHE DON'T KNOW CAN BE NOTHING MORE...
AN' EVERYTHING LESS.
AND WHAT IF I WERE IN TROUBLE?
WELL IN THAT SPECIAL CASE, DARLIN'...
I'D TOSS YA BACK TO THE DOGS WHO AIN'T DONE RAPIN' YOU YET! "TROUBLE"... PAH! MORE LIKE YOU WAS ASKIN' FOR IT AND GOT MORE THAN YOU COULD HANDLE! NOT MY PROBLEM, CUNT!
...YOU'RE ORDIN, AREN'T YOU? ITS A GOOD THING I WARNED MEGAN AND SUSAN ABOUT YOU.
OH ARE YOU THE ONE TA THANK FOR THAT UNGRATEFUL BITCH NOT TURNIN' HER BACK LONG ENOUGH TA GET THE LITTLE ONE AWAY?!
WHY? WHAT DID YOU WANT WITH SUSAN?
CAN'T EXPECT YOU TO UNDERSTAND, BEIN' A WOMAN, SO LEMME BREAK IT DOWN FOR YOU.
EVEN THE LITTLE ONES ARE WHORES. THEY JUST NEED A SPECIAL SORT OF ENCOURAGIN'.
YOU START WITH THE MAMA BEAR, GET HER INTERESTED, MAKE HER THINK SHE'S FINALLY FOUND HERSELF A MAN WHO UNDERSTANDS HOW HARD IT IS BEIN' A WHORE PRETENDIN' SHE'S A MAN.
AFTER THAT, THE LITTLE ONES COME RIGHT TO YA. DON'T GOTTA BUY 'EM NOTHIN' EXPENSIVE, DON'T GOTTA WONDER WHAT OTHER MAN SHE'S FUCKED. YOU KNOW YOU'LL BE HER FIRST
THEN ONE DAY MAMA COMES HOME TA FIND YA'VE LOST INTEREST AND MOVED ON WHILE SHE WAS OUT SHOPPIN. AIN'T TIL LATER THEY FIND THEIR BABY FACE-DOWN IN THE RIVER. WITH MY MARK INSIDE 'EM.

YOU'RE A SICK PIECE OF WORK. I'm VERY GLAD YOU'RE DEAD.

WHY? SO I CAN'T HURT NO MORE LITTLE GIRLS?

I'VE BEEN READIN' THIS BOOK BY A GUY IN MAINE ABOUT A CLOWN WHO LIVES IN A SEWER...

YOU'RE REALLY DEDICATED TO THIS, AREN'T YOU...?

JUST T'DAY I WAS FOLLOWING THIS BITCH AN' HER SWEET LITTLE GIRL. SHE HAD ON TH' MOST ADORABLE LITTLE LACE BLOOMERS—

THANK YOU. THAT'S ENOUGH. I NEED TO GET AWAY FROM YOU NOW.

AM I TALKING TO ASHLEY SCHNIEDER?

UM...YES? WHO ARE YOU? WHAT'S GOING ON?

YOUR DAUGHTER HAS BEEN TALKING TO SOMEONE SHE CALLS MISTER ORDIN, RIGHT?

I--WELL, YES. THAT'S HER IMAGINARY FRIEND.

YOU WON'T REMEMBER THIS TALK, BUT YOU WILL REMEMBER THAT YOU NEED TO MAKE HER STOP TALKING TO HIM.

HUH?

ITS FOR THE BEST, I PROMISE. NOW, DO YOU KNOW ANY TRUSTWORTHY DOCTORS?

WELL... OUR FAMILY DOCTOR FOR THE LAST FIFTEEN YEARS BUT—

PERFECT. GOOD-BYE, ASHLEY.

NOW... AM I SPEAKING TO DOCTOR JERE—

WAIT... DAD?!

ARLOEST...? I AM GOING... TO SHOOT... MYSELF. WHERE ARE YOUR CLOTHES?!

ACTUALLY IT'S GOOD I RAN INTO YOU. YOU SEE—

HONEY, FROM NOW ON? JUST CALL. I KNOW I'M NOT GOING TO REMEMBER THIS, BUT I SWEAR IT TAKES YEARS OFF MY LIFE EVERY TIME YOU PUT ME THROUGH IT. YOU PROMISED YOUR MOM YOU WOULDN'T PLAY THIS KIND OF PRANK ANYMORE REMEMBER?

SO WHO'S BODY IS THIS, NOW?

IT'S NOT A PRANK, DAD, I'LL EXPLAIN IT ALL LATER. I PROMISE.

ARE ANY OF YOUR PATIENTS NEAR DEATH? IT'S IMPORTANT.

IF YOU SAY IT'S IMPORTANT, I'LL BELIEVE YOU. BUT PLEASE, DON'T GIVE MS. HARISH ANY GRIEF.

I'LL TALK TO YOU LATER, DAD. THANK YOU. ... MS. HARISH? CAN YOU HEAR ME?

OH! A VISITOR. HELLO THERE...

HELLO. THIS IS A STRANGE QUESTION, BUT HAVE YOU MET A STRANGE-LOOKING MAN WITH RED EYES LATELY?

OH...? THAT RABBIT FELLOW? HE VISITED JUST THIS MORNING TO ASK IF I WAS NEARLY READY TO GO.

THANK YOU. PARDON ME.

WHO AM I SPEAKING WITH NOW? ARE YOU THE REA—

ARLOEST!!

Y-YOU KNOW ME...?

YOU SENT MEGAN AND SUSAN TO FIND ME, BUT WHY? WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT?!

.....

.....!!

GET OUT!

WAIT! ORDIN! DO YOU KNOW A BIRD NAMED ORDIN?

ORDIN!!

WHERE IS HE?

HE'S HIDING FROM YOU UNDER A BROKEN BRIDGE, NEAR TO WHERE MEGAN AND SUSAN JUMPED FROM.

NOT FOR LONG. I'LL DRAG HIM TO HELL BY HIS INTESTINES!

NOW, GET OUT!!

PLEASE...THERE MUST BE OTHERS LIKE MEGAN AND SUSAN THAT YOU KNOW OF. I NEED TO TALK TO-

GOT HIM! I'LL LEAVE YOU BE.

MEGAN? YOU OKAY UP THERE?

UNNH... 'PCHY ZA GA'LIMA?

EVERYTHING IS FINE! ABBA...? WHY DON'T YOU TAKE SUSAN FOR A WALK?

IS NO DOUBT STILL DAYLIGHT IN AMERICA.

BUT IN RUSSIA IS TIME TO SLEEP!

YOU! TELL SUSAN YOU'RE OKAY!

EH...? OKAY-- NAKED LADY...

UH... NOT TO WORRY, SUSAN, RICHEK IS —

YOUR NAME IS MEGAN!

WHAT KIND OF KINKY GAME—

SAY IT!

IS NOT TO WORRY, SUSAN! MEGAN IS FINE!

WHAT WAS ALL THE YELLIN' FOR?

IS NO TROUBLE, SUSAN, NAKED LADY JUST ENJOYING RIDE.

IS MESS IN HERE, SUSAN. ALL PARTIES WOULD AGREE. SO! MEGAN CLEAN MESS, THEN HE-

SVYATOE DER-MO!! ARE THESE MY TITS?!

L-LISTEN, SUSAN, MEGAN COME OUT SOON. EXPLAIN WHOLE THING THEN...

OKAY...

TELL RICHEK HONESTLY... THERE IS NO VODKA LEFT IN HIS REFRIGERATOR, IS THERE?

RICHEK, RIGHT?

THIS IS ALL JUST A BAD DREAM.

WELL... TO SOME MAYBE, BUT... UH...

LEAVE THOSE ALONE. THEY DON'T BELONG TO YOU.

WAIT.. YOU'RE JUST LIKE MEGAN.

WOULD BEG TO DIFFER. AM NOTHING LIKE THIS MEGAN!

NO. YOU'VE SEEN THE REAPER

OKAY, NAKED LADY STARTING TO SCARE RICHEK.

HOW DO YOU KNOW HARVEY?

MAYBE I'M GOING AT THIS THE WRONG WAY. YOU'RE A RUSSIAN POLICEMAN?

IS NOT BRONX, THIS ACCENT.

YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO KNOW ANY AMERICAN COPS, WOULD YOU?

WELL, IS ONE CUTE GIRL—

GOT HER. DON'T WORRY, RICHEK, YOU WON'T REMEMBER ANY OF THIS.

CHERT VOZ'MI

OFFICER JUSTI?

UM.... JUSTI?

MA'AM?

ZZzz

HEY!

WHAT?! WHAT HAPPENED?!

DON'T WORRY. I WON'T HURT YOU.

I WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD—

WOULD BE HARD FOR YOU TO HURT ME, HONEY. YOU'RE ALREADY DEAD. NNGH... I HATE DREAMING ABOUT WORK.

WHAT...? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? HOW DO YOU KNOW ME?

I WORKED ON YOUR CASE BACK WHEN CLIFF WAS WITH US. YOU WERE THAT GIRL WHO KILLED HERSELF FOLLOWING YOUR KIDNAPPING. IT WAS BACK WHEN DRIP—

WAIT. ....WAIT, I REMEMBER DRIP. HE WAS.... HE DID ALL OF THOSE THINGS TO ME. THEN I....B-BUT I CAME BACK...! DON'T TAKE THE HIGHWAY HOME. I--I DON'T REMEMBER HER. ....I CAME BACK.

I'M SORRY I WISH WE COULD HAVE SAVED YOU


I DIED... SOMEHOW I CAME BACK. STARTED OVER BECAUSE I WANTED TO FORGET... THEN THE REAPER CAME FOR ME. I WAS REBORN INTO THIS LIFE, BUT... BUT WHY DID I WANT TO FORGET? FORGET WHAT?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND
THANK YOU, JUST I, FOR YOUR HELP BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT ALL EITHER JUST YET.
MEETING YOU HAS GIVEN ME MOST OF THE PUZZLE, MAYBE THE NEXT WILL GIVE ME THE LAST FEW PIECES.
AM I NOW TALKING TO—
HLRK!
YOU BITCH! YOU LITTLE WHORE!
WE HAD A DEAL...
JUST BECAUSE THEY TOOK YOU OUT OF HELL DOESN'T MEAN YOU AREN'T STILL MINE!
WE HAD A DEAL! YOU'RE MINE! MINE!!
I TOOK YOU TO THE DEVIL, HE SENT YOU BACK!
I'LL FUCK YOU INTO A GREY, TWITCHING PASTE...!!
W-WHAT...?! WHAT DEAL?
MEGAN...?! MEGAN!! MEGAN, WAKE UP!
MINE!
M-MEGAN!!
...MEGAN...?
HE--NO... NO! THAT FUCKER WAS RIGHT! I'M A--
I KNOW WHAT I WOULD DO TO ME....
I DON'T WANT IT! I DON'T WANT TO FEEL WHAT I DID TO THEM!
MEGAN?
....MEGAN, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
MEGAN, ARE YOU OKAY?
I'M NOT MEGAN...
THEN WHO AM I TALKING TO?
BRISK...
BUT... MEGAN, YOUR NAME IS — OH--!
OH MY GOD, I'VE HURT YOU...!
NO, NO... SHE PULLED ME FROM THE RAT

BRISK, WHAT'S GOING ON?

WE WERE SEARCHING FOR THE PAST AND THIS IS AS FAR BACK AS I GO.

A PRETTY LITTLE THING AMONG ALL OF THE OTHER PRETTY THINGS IN THAT BOOK. ALL WAITING FOR THE SPARK.

WHAT SPARK...?

INSPIRATION!

WHAT WAS IT LIKE, ARLOEST? WHEN THE SPARK CAME TO YOU?

LOOK! THERE'S ONE NOW!

A SLIVER OF INVENTION.

THE FIRST FRACTION OF INSIGHT.

I THOUGHT IT WOULD SEEK OUT ONE OF THE PRETTIER GIRLS...

BUT, NO! IT'S COMING TO ME!

A VOICE CAME FROM IT AND IT SAID...

"NONE OF YOUR GIRLS ARE NAMED MEGAN"

"HOW ABOUT THIS LITTLE LADY HERE? BRISK? WOULD YOU MIND IF YOUR NAME BECAME MEGAN AND "BRISK" BECAME A WELL-LOVED NICKNAME?

AND I SAID, OF COURSE, THAT I DIDN'T MIND AT ALL!

THE VOICE THEN SAID TO ME

"PLAY WITH THIS SPARK, MEGAN, AND LET ME KNOW WHAT YOU COME UP WITH.

WE PLAYED. WE THOUGHT. WE PLOTTED.

AND THEN WE RETURNED.

THIS IS QUITE A STORY THAT YOU AND THE SPARK HAVE COME UP WITH. IT STILL NEEDS A LOT OF WORK, AND I'M NOT SURE I CAN PULL OFF SOME OF THE MORE EXPERIMENTAL ELEMENTS. PLUS, I JUST DON'T HAVE THE TIME TO—

THEN ABBA STOOD UP AND SAID:

BUT ITS A GOOD STORY!

AND EVEN YOU—

ME...?

YES, YOU SAID:

I'M GAME IF THEY ARE! LET'S DO IT!

ALRIGHT, FINE! ANOTHER EPIC, GOD HELP ME, I'LL DO IT WHEN I CAN.

AND THEN EVERYONE WITHIN THE SPARK, FROM THE SICK BLUE RAT, TO THE TIRED BLUE SKUNK, FROM THE RED-EYED WANDERER TO THE LITTLE LOST BOY WITH NO NOSE SAID "CONGRATULATIONS. THIS IS YOUR HOME NOW"

...AND THEN THE VOICE TOLD THEM ALL TO BE QUIET, IT HAD LOTS TO DO AND NEEDED TO REST BEFORE WORK.

AND THEN...THE MOST WONDERFUL THING OF ALL HAPPENED...

THE SPARK CAME BACK.

AND THIS TIME, IN ITS OWN VOICE, SAID TO ME-

MEGAN, PUSSYCAT?

I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET...

...SUSAN.

...WHUH?

MEGAN?

ARLOEST, WHAT HAPPENED?

A LOT.

THANK GOD YOU'RE OKAY.

IT WAS BRASH OF ME TO DO THIS TO YOU. I PUT YOU IN SUCH DANGER, MEGAN. I'M SO SORRY.

ALL I REMEMBER IS YOU TELLING ME TO RELAX AND THEN SOMETHING ABOUT SUSAN. DID YOU FIND A WAY TO HELP HER?

I THINK SO... BUT I'M WARNING YOU RIGHT NOW IT WON'T BE EASY.

AS HARD AS IT IS TO BELIEVE THAT I HAD A PAST LIFE, IT'S MUCH HARDER TO COME TO TERMS WITH HOW THAT LIFE ENDED

I CAN'T BELIEVE I ALLOWED THAT BASTARD SO MUCH CONTROL OVER MY LIFE THAT I ESSENTIALLY SACRIFICED MYSELF TO HIM, BUT I KNOW IT'S TRUE...

MY SPECIAL TALENTS, THOUGH GRANTED BY THE AFTERLIFE WERE USELESS THERE.

I SUPPOSE I SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SURPRISED TO FIND HIM IN HELL AS WELL.

WE MADE A DEAL, THEN HE TOOK ME TO THE DEVIL WHO SHOWED IT TO ME... I DON'T THINK DRIP - OR EVEN THE REAPER - KNOW ABOUT THE DOOR.

A DOOR CONNECTING HELL TO THE WORLD OF THE LIVING. ONLY PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND SUSAN CAN USE THAT DOOR, LET ALONE SEE IT. IT'S TO KEEP THOSE IN HELL FROM USING IT TO FIND A PERMANENT ESCAPE BACK TO THE LIVING.

ISN'T THERE A GUARDIAN?

YES. OR SORT OF. I CAN'T RECALL... IT MAY AS WELL BE A MOUNTAIN

WHERE IS THIS DOOR? AND WHAT COULD WE POSSIBLY DO WITH IT?

NOT FAR. A CHURCH IN MAINE AND, FROM WHAT LITTLE I RECALL OF HELL, I KNOW ANGELS INFREQUENTLY VISIT IT. IF YOU FIND ONE, I'M HOPING IT WILL HELP YOU FROM THERE.

REAPERS, DOORWAYS, ANGELS, HELL... WHERE DOES IT ALL END?

ARE YOU GONNA GO AWAY, BRISK?

MEGAN? IF YOU STAY, SUSAN MAY NOT EVER HAVE A FULL LIFE, BUT SHE'LL ALWAYS HAVE YOU.

I SEE YOU STEPPING THROUGH THAT DOOR, AND THEN THAT'S ALL. I...I DON'T THINK YOU COME BACK.

...I MAY NEED TO LEAVE FOR AWHILE, SUSAN...

BUT I WILL COME BACK.

NO! I DON'T WANT YOU TO GO, MEGAN! I DON'T NEED TO GROW UP! I'LL GO TO SCHOOL FOREVER! I'LL EVEN HAVE A BEDTIME! JUST STAY!!

SUSAN... PLEASE. IT'S SO HARD AS IT IS.

YOU DESERVE THE CHANCE TO BE WHOEVER YOU WANT TO BE... THAT'S WHY WE CAME ALL THIS WAY.

I'M GONNA BE A FIREMAN. SO I CAN SAVE LITTLE GIRLS AND BE JUST LIKE YOU.

SEE? THAT'S WHY YOU NEED TO GROW UP. IF YOU STAY LITTLE FOREVER AND I LET YOU, WHAT KIND OF FUTURE WOULD THAT BE?

I'D MAKE AN AWFUL FIREMAN IF I RESCUED A LITTLE GIRL JUST TO TOSS HER BACK INTO THE FIRE

I GUESS...

SO, FOR A WHILE, I NEED YOU TO STAY HERE WITH MS. ARLOEST AND ABBA WHILE I TAKE CARE OF THIS.

BUT BRISK—

JUST A LITTLE WHILE, OKAY?

CAN I COUNT ON YOU? IF YOU CAN DO THIS, SUSAN, YOU CAN DO ANYTHING.

I'LL TRY...

I LOVE YOU VERY, VERY MUCH, SUSAN.

I'LL MISS YOU...

YOUR DOOR WAS OPEN SO I LET MYSELF IN.

CALM DOWN, MEGAN. THIS IS MY BROTHER VIRGIL. HE'LL BE DRIVING YOU TO MAINE.

WAIT! MAINE?

SORRY, VIRG. MY FAVOR ENDED UP A LITTLE BIGGER THAN EXPECTED.

HELL, I THOUGHT I WAS JUST TAKING YOU INTO THE NEXT COUNTY. HI, BY THE WAY. WHAT CAN I CALL THE TWO OF YOU?

I'M MEGAN. AND THIS IS SUSAN.

HAPPY TO MEET YOU. 'LOEST HAS BEEN KEEPING ME MOSTLY UP-TO-DATE.

SUSAN? I HOPE YOU SEE THAT MEGAN LOVES THE HELL OUT OF YOU

I KNOW SHE DOES.

HEY VIRG? CAN I TALK TO YOU FOR A SECOND?

SURE, WHAT'S UP?

HE'S REALLY NICE.

DO YOU THINK SO?

I ALREADY TALKED TO MOM AND DAD. IF WE NEED TO HIDE SUSAN FOR A BIT, THEY'LL TAKE CARE OF HER. YOU KNOW HOW MOM IS.

I MEAN ARE YOU OKAY WITH WHAT WILL HAPPEN? I DON'T KNOW HOW, BUT YOU'RE GOING TO GET CAUGHT.

I KNOW, YOU TOLD ME. AND YOU KNOW WHAT? THIS IS MORE IMPORTANT. WE'LL DEAL WITH IT WHEN IT HAPPENS.

JUST VISIT ME ONCE A YEAR AND KEEP AN EYE ON MOM AND DAD

AND IF YOU SEE ANY VISIONS OF ME BECOMING SOME GUY'S WIFE IN THERE, DROP ME A WARNING, ALRIGHT?

'M GONNA WAIT...

JUST PLEASE COME BACK, BRISK.

....I MISS HER ALREADY.

IS THAT A SHOT-GUN?

YEAH. SIS THOUGHT YOU COULD TAKE IT WITH YOU

MIGHT NEED IT...

...WHERE I'M GOING.

HOW SO?

WELL, IT'S IRONIC, VIRGIL...

YOU'RE DELIVERING ME INTO THE INFERNO.

YOU GOING BACK TO SLEEP, VIRG?

NAH, JUST NEEDED A NAP BEFORE WE GET BACK ON THE ROAD.

WHAT ABOUT YOU? YOU HAVEN'T SLEPT ALL NIGHT.

I'M GOOD.

YOU'RE AN AMAZING PERSON, MEGAN. ALL THIS WAY FOR A LITTLE GIRL

I HAD A LOT OF HELP.

AND STILL YOU'RE GOING TO DO MORE...

HOPEFULLY I CAN FIND MORE HELP WHERE I'M GOING.

RIGHT, HELL. I'M STILL TRYING TO COME TO GRIPS WITH IT BEING A REAL PLACE.

...WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE GETTING READY TO GO THERE?

I MEAN...YOU SEEM LIKE YOU'RE HANDLING ALL THIS VERY WELL.

I APPRECIATE THAT, VIRGIL, BUT I'M REALLY NOT.